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ABSTRACT

In order to determine whether Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) had the capability of producing a TV series of high technical quality with content that met criteria designed for the selection of children's television programs, a pilot tape produced by AEL was submitted for rating to educational television (ETV) specialists from the State Departments of Education serviced by AEL and other ETV facilities. Most of the specialists reacted favorably to the tapes in terms of meeting the selection criteria, providing a variation in character images, and exhibiting technical quality. Many felt that a series similar to the pilots would be suitable for use in their areas. Several individuals did indicate concern over the relative emphasis of children versus adults, the reality of the situations, and the advanced level of the vocabulary used in the tapes. ETV personnel from AEL's geographical region gave more positive ratings than did other ETV personnel. Based on these responses, it appears that AEL has demonstrated its capability of producing TV tapes which exhibit technical quality and meet the selection criteria for children's programs. (WDE)

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Educational Television Personnel's Review of the Technical Quality, Content Criteria, and Marketability of AEL's "Around the Bend" Pilot Tapes

Joe E. Shively

IR 000 843

Technical Report No. 31

Research and Evaluation Divisic
Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
Charleston, West Virginia

June 8, 1973

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Educational Television Personnel's Review of the Technical Quality, Content Criteria, and Marketability of AEL's "Around the Bend" Pilot Tapes

A television series for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children in Appalachia is currently being planned by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL). The series is to be an integral component of the Home-Oriented Preschool Education (HOPE) program, a program designed to meet the educational needs of children in the Appalachian Region. However, the capability of AEL to produce a television series which is of high technical quality was questioned by the National Institute of Education (NIE) during an evaluation conducted by NIE in the Fall of 1972. An NIE specialist panel recommended "that AEL initiate development of the proposed marketable TV series".[1] Dr. Thomas K. Glennan, Director of the NIE, then directed AEL to explore and document the capability of development of a TV program, and stated that reviewers had "noted certain problems with respect to the technical quality of your marketable preschool education program".[2]

In accordance with the NIE communications, the purpose of this report is to document the capability of AEL to produce a television program of adequate technical quality. This report also documents the degree to which the content of the television program meets criteria designed for the selection of children's television programs.

Educational Television Personnel Input

Input about AEL's TV programs from educational television (ETV) personnel is considered very valuable for product development. The ETV specialists have presented indications of and possibilities for implementation of the TV series

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[1]Specialist Panel Verification Review, October 9-10, 1972, p. 5, by November 22, 1972, memorandum from Dr. Marc S. Tucker, Task Force on Lab/Center Transition.

[2]By letter dated November 10, 1972.

at their facilities. The formation of an advisory group of ETV personnel is providing valuable input during the development of the TV series for the HOPE program. The review of the pilot tapes is providing AEL with ETV specialists' ratings of the tapes, as compared to other ETV offerings.

To insure a television program of high technical quality, the television studios of 21st Century Productions (WLAC-TV), Nashville, Tennessee, were selected to produce the pilot tapes and eventually the whole TV series.[3]

Content Criteria and Technical Quality Assessment Procedure

Educational television (ETV) specialists from five State Departments of Education in the Appalachian Region and from other ETV facilities met in Memphis, Tennessee, in late May, 1973, for the annual conference of the Southern Education Communications Association (SECA). During a meeting of the SECA on May 29, the first of two pilot tapes[4] produced by AEL was shown to an audience of ETV personnel. The individuals who viewed the tape in that meeting were asked to rate the tape in terms of (1) the degree to which the tape met selected content criteria, (2) the technical quality of the tape, and (3) the suitability of using such tapes at their broadcasting facilities. (See Appendix A for the questionnaire.)

The selected criteria, developed by AEL and validated by a panel consisting of such personnel as Robert 'Captain Kangaroo' Keeshan, Dr. Rose Mukerji,

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[3]Bertram, Charles L. and others. Appalachia needs HOPE: The need for and capability of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory to develop a new preschool television program. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., May, 1973.

[4]Not enough time was allocated to the conference session to permit the showing of both pilot tapes.

Dr. Martha Rashid, Dr. Herbert Sprigle, and Mr. Eugene Wenger,[5] were the same criteria presented to State Department Early Childhood Education specialists.[6] The questions relating to technical quality contained 17 categories developed initially by AEL staff members and revised slightly after consultation with television experts at 21st Century Productions. Commercial television personnel rated both pilot tapes according to these categories.[7]

There were 25 ETV personnel who viewed the tape and responded to the questionnaire. Of these 25, there were five ETV personnel from State Departments of Education in the region served by AEL and 20 from other ETV facilities. The five represented states were Alabama, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia. (For specific names of State Department ETV personnel, see Appendix B.)

Results

The responses to the various topic areas of the questionnaire will be discussed in terms of responses of the five State Department ETV personnel and then in terms of responses by the total group of 25 ETV personnel.

Content Criteria. The first part of the questionnaire (items 1-8) dealt with the degree to which the pilot tape met the criteria for selection as an

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[5]Bertram, Charles L. Selection of criteria for the Home-Oriented Preschool Education television series and the rating of available children's television programs according to the criteria: Technical Report No. 27. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., May, 1973.

[6]Shively, Joe E. State department early childhood education program specialists' review of the content and technical quality of AEL's "Around the Bend" pilot tapes: Technical Report No. 30. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., May, 1973.

[7]Shively, Joe E. Commercial television personnel's review of the technical quality and marketability of AEL's "Around the Bend" pilot tapes: Technical Report No. 29. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., May, 1973.

early childhood education program. The ETV specialists were asked to rate each of the eight items in terms of whether the pilot tape a.) most definitely met, b.) probably met, c.) uncertain, d.) probably didn't meet, e.) definitely did not meet each of the stated criteria. Their responses were then coded in a 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 fashion respectively. Table 1 presents the response frequencies and means for each item for the five State Department ETV personnel and Table 2 presents the response frequencies and means for the total group of 25 ETV personnel.

Table 1 indicates that all State Department ETV personnel in the region serviced by AEL were positively oriented and felt that the tape "most definitely" or "probably" met the eight criteria. None of the five respondents felt that the tape "probably didn't" or "definitely didn't" meet any of the eight selected criteria. All eight criteria had a mean score response above the "probably so" (4) level. All five ETV personnel felt that the pilot tape "most definitely" provided a variation in character images.

Table 2 indicates that there was some degree of uncertainty among the total group of 25 ETV specialists as to whether the tape met the criteria for selection. Two individuals felt that the tape was "probably not" or "definitely not" paced appropriately for optimal learning. However, six of the eight criteria had mean responses above the "probably so" (4) level and the other two criteria had mean responses slightly below this level (3.96 and 3.76).

Technical Quality. The second part of the questionnaire dealt with the technical quality of the tape. Item 9, which dealt exclusively with the technical quality, included 16 categories for judging specific technical qualities and one category for judging overall technical quality. The 25 ETV personnel were asked to rate each of the six categories in terms of the pilot tape being a.) excellent quality, b.) above average quality, c.) average

Table 1

Response Frequencies and Means for Criteria for Selection
Appalachian State Department ETV Specialists
(n = 5)

	Frequencies					
	Most Definitely (5)	Probably So (4)	Uncertain (3)	Probably Not (2)	Definitely Not (1)	Mean Score
1. Content is age relevant (3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds)	1	4	-	-	-	4.20
2. Consistent with accepted objectives for preschool children.	1	4	-	-	-	4.20
3. Sequenced according to recognized principles of learning.	2	3	-	-	-	4.40
4. Balance of cognitive, affective, motor, and social skills learning.	3	2	-	-	-	4.60
5. Paced for optimal learning.	2	3	-	-	-	4.40
6. Provides a variation in character images.	5	-	-	-	-	5.00
7. Emphasis on learning rather than entertainment.	3	2	-	-	-	4.60
8. Can be integrated with group experience and home visitation elements.	1	4	-	-	-	4.20

Table 2

Response Frequencies and Means for Criteria for Selection
ETV Specialists
(n = 25)

	Frequencies					
	Most Definitely (5)	Probably So (4)	Uncertain (3)	Probably Not (2)	Definitely Not (1)	Mean Score
1. Content is age relevant (3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds)	9	14	2	-	-	4.28
2. Consistent with accepted objectives for preschool children.	7	15	3	-	-	4.16
3. Sequenced according to recognized principles of learning.	7	10	8	-	-	3.96
4. Balance of cognitive, affective, motor, and social skills learning.	11	12	2	-	-	4.36
5. Paced for optimal learning.	6	10	7	1	1	3.76
6. Provides a variation in character images.	17	6	-	2	-	4.52
7. Emphasis on learning rather than entertainment.	10	13	1	1	-	4.28
8. Can be integrated with group experience and home visitation elements.	11	13	1	-	-	4.40

quality, d.) below average quality, and e.) unacceptable. Ratings were based on established broadcasting standards. Their responses were then coded in a 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 fashion respectively. Table 3 presents the response frequencies and means for each category for the five State Department ETV personnel and Table 4 presents the response frequencies and means for the total group of 25 ETV personnel.

Table 3 indicates that 15 of the 16 specific categories attained mean scores between excellent (5) and above average quality (4). Only one category attained a mean score between above average quality (4) and average quality (3). This category was CAMERAS (3.40). One individual indicated that camera shots were below average in quality (2) and one individual indicated that SPECIAL EFFECTS (specifically supers) was below average in quality. The OVERALL QUALITY was rated between above average and excellent in quality (4.40).

Table 4 indicates six of the 16 specific categories attained mean scores between excellent (5) and above average quality (4). Of the other ten categories which fell between above average quality (4) and average quality (3), eight fell at or above a 3.50 level and two fell below. One individual felt that the CONTINUITY OF PROGRAMMING was unacceptable and one individual felt that the GRAPHICS was unacceptable. The OVERALL QUALITY was rated exactly at the above average quality level: 4.00.

Figure 1 presents a pictorial representation of the data presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Commercial television personnel,[8] who previously had the opportunity to rate both pilot tapes according to these categories, rated the OVERALL

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[8]Shively, Joe E. Commercial television personnel's review of the technical quality and marketability of AEL's "Around the Bend" pilot tapes: Technical Report No. 29. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., May, 1973.

Table 3

Response Frequencies and Means for Technical Quality for Each Category
Appalachian State Department ETV Specialists
(n = 5)

	Frequencies					
	Excellent (5)	Above Average Quality (4)	Average (3)	Below Average Quality (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Mean Score
COLOR (balance, intensity, use of color)	3	1	1	-	-	4.40
LIGHTING (adequacy, special uses)	4	-	1	-	-	4.60
CAMERAS (composition of shots, movements, sequence of shots, close-ups, camera placements)	1	1	2	1	-	3.40
SETS AND SET DRESSINGS (functional use, style, kinds)	2	1	2	-	-	4.00
MAKEUP AND COSTUMES (appropriateness, style)	2	2	1	-	-	4.20
SPECIAL EFFECTS (inserts, supers)	3	1	-	1	-	4.20
FILM SEGMENTS	2	3	-	-	-	4.40
EDITS (quality of edit points)	3	-	2	-	-	4.20
TRANSITIONS (dissolves, cuts)	3	-	2	-	-	4.20
CONTINUITY OF PROGRAMMING (obvious flow)	1	3	1	-	-	4.00
SOUND (adequate miking, balance, extraneous noise, mixing, synchronization)	3	2	-	-	-	4.60
MUSIC (appropriate, underscoring, theme, instrumentation, selection)	4	-	1	-	-	4.60
TALENT (moves, delivery, casting, voice)	2	2	1	-	-	4.20
PUPPETS (movements, timing, voices, synchronization, setting, appropriateness)	2	2	1	-	-	4.20
ANIMATION (art work, sound, timing)	3	-	2	-	-	4.20
GRAPHICS (titling)	3	2	-	-	-	4.60
OVERALL QUALITY	3	1	1	-	-	4.40

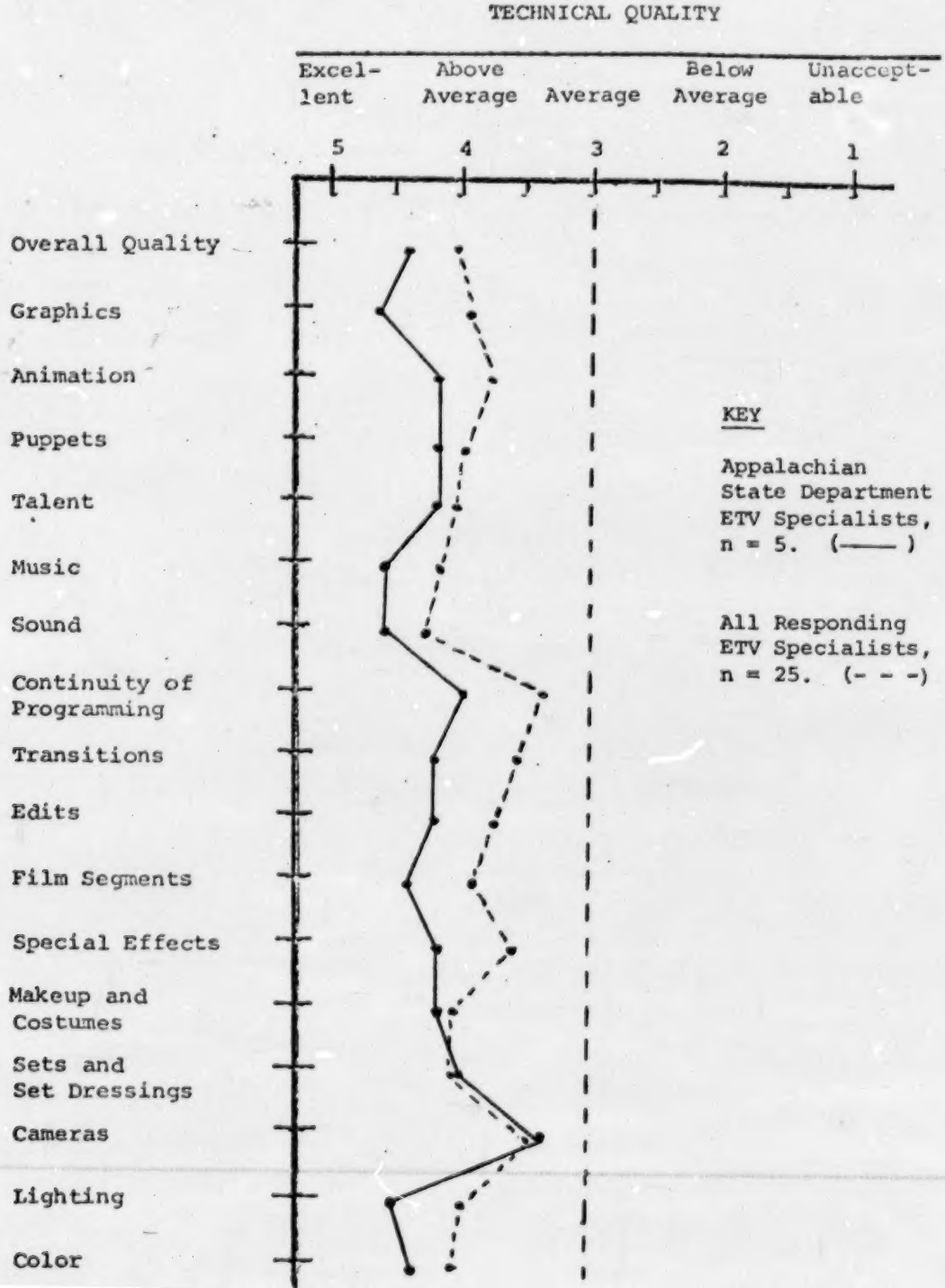
Table 4

Response Frequencies and Means for Technical Quality for Each Category -- ETV Specialists
(n = 25)

	Frequencies						
	Excellent (5)	Above Average Quality (4)	Average (3)	Below Average Quality (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Mean Score	Number Responding
COLOR (balance, intensity, use of color)	8	10	6	-	-	4.08	24
LIGHTING (adequacy, special uses)	9	8	6	2	-	3.96	24
CAMERAS (composition of shots, movements, sequence of shots, close-ups, camera placements)	2	10	11	2	-	3.48	25
SETS AND SET DRESSINGS (functional use, style, kinds)	7	11	6	-	-	4.04	24
MAKEUP AND COSTUMES (appropriateness, style)	8	12	5	-	-	4.12	25
SPECIAL EFFECTS (inserts, supers)	5	3	12	2	-	3.50	22
FILM SEGMENTS	6	9	6	1	-	3.91	22
EDITS (quality of edit points)	5	6	9	1	-	3.71	21
TRANSITIONS (dissolves, cuts)	5	4	13	1	-	3.57	23
CONTINUITY OF PROGRAMMING (obvious flow)	4	10	8	1	1	3.35	24
SOUND (adequate mixing, balance, extraneous noise, mixing, synchronization)	8	13	2	-	-	4.26	23
MUSIC (appropriate, underscoring, theme, instrumentation, selection)	11	7	6	-	-	4.21	24
TALENT (moves, delivery, casting, voice)	9	10	5	1	-	4.08	25
PUPPETS (movements, timing, voices, synchronization, setting, appropriateness)	6	12	7	-	-	3.96	25
ANIMATION (art work, sound, timing)	6	6	9	1	-	3.77	22
GRAPHICS (titling)	8	8	7	1	1	3.84	25
OVERALL QUALITY	6	12	6	-	-	4.00	24

Figure 1

Profile of Mean Responses to Categories of Technical Quality of the HOPE Pilot Tapes by ETV Specialists



QUALITY of the tapes at 3.78. COLOR, LIGHTING, SOUND, and MUSIC all received mean ratings between excellent and above average quality. CONTINUITY OF PROGRAMMING received the lowest mean rating (2.56) by commercial television personnel.

Suitability/marketability. The third part of the questionnaire (items 10-12) dealt with the suitability and marketability of the television series. Table 5 (on page 12) presents response frequencies and means for the three questions dealing with suitability/marketability. The responses were coded 2, 1, and 0 for each question. Table 5 indicates that the State Department ETV personnel were very positive toward such a series of TV tapes. The reaction of the total group of ETV specialists, however, was less positive than that exhibited just by State Department ETV personnel. One individual indicated that he felt that such tapes would not be suitable for use at his facility, yet he indicated that maybe he would be willing to make some effort to obtain them. Several individuals did not respond to these questions. Another individual indicated that such a TV series would not be suitable for use at her facility because her school telecasting was to a totally urban population.

The final question (item 13) asked for changes or revisions that they would suggest for the television series. Although there were several suggestions for changes or revisions, most comments fell into four main categories: 1.) There were several comments about the sequences or situations being contrived or unrealistic; 2.) children should be used more frequently; 3.) camera techniques and sequencing could be improved; and 4.) vocabulary seemed advanced or difficult.

Table 5

Response Frequencies and Means for Suitability/Marketability*

Question	Response Choice (Weight) and Frequency of Selection			Mean
	Yes (2)	Possibly/Uncertain (1)	No (0)	
10. In your professional opinion, will a series of TV tapes produced by AEL be suitable for use at your facility, assuming the same techniques and procedures are utilized?	5/16	0/5	0/2	2.00/1.61
	Enthusiastically (2)	So-So (1)	Poorly (0)	
11. How would tapes such as these be received in your market area?	4/10	0/8	0/0	2.00/1.56
	Definitely (2)	Maybe (1)	No (0)	
12. Would you be willing to make some effort to obtain these tapes?	5/11	0/8	0/1	2.00/1.50

*KEY: State Department ETV/All ETV

Summary

In an effort to determine if AEL has the capability of producing a TV series of high technical quality and whose content meets criteria designed for the selection of children's television programs, a pilot tape produced by AEL was submitted for rating to educational television specialists from State Departments of Education serviced by AEL and other ETV facilities. Based upon the responses of these individuals to a questionnaire dealing with content and technical quality, it appears that AEL has been able to demonstrate its capability of producing TV tapes which exhibit technical quality and meet criteria for selection of children's television programs.

Most of the ETV specialists felt that the pilot tape met the selection criteria. They were quite positive about the tape providing a variation in character images. Nearly all of the individuals also felt that the tape exhibited a technical quality which was above average or excellent. Many felt that a series of tapes produced by AEL which would be similar to the pilot tape would be suitable for use in their states. Several individuals did indicate, however, that the child should be emphasized more, that sequences or situations were unreal, and that the vocabulary seemed advanced. ETV personnel from AEL's geographical region gave more positive ratings to the tape than did other ETV personnel, but all ratings appeared to be positive.

Thus, it appears that AEL has produced pilot tapes of high technical quality and which meet selection criteria appropriate to children's television programs. If AEL is to produce a series of tapes which achieve such high ratings, then the issues and concerns voiced by these educational television specialists must be taken into consideration as the new series is developed.

Appendix A

Responses of Educational Television Personnel
to AEL's Pilot Tapes

We are quite anxious to have your candid reactions to the pilot tapes prepared for our early childhood program. Please rate Items 1-8 by circling the appropriate numbers as indicated in the following scale: 5 - most definitely; 4 - probably so; 3 - uncertain; 2 - questionable (probably not); 1 - definitely not.

	Most Definitely	Probably So	Uncertain	Probably Not	Definitely Not
1. Content is age relevant (3-, 4-, and 5-year olds).	5	4	3	2	1
2. Consistent with accepted objectives for preschool children.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Sequenced according to recognized principles of learning.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Balance of cognitive, affective, motor, and social skills learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Paced for optimal learning.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Provides a variation in character images.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Emphasis on learning rather than entertainment.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Can be integrated with group experience and home visitation elements.	5	4	3	2	1

9. Rate Item 9 according to the following scale: 5 - excellent quality; 4 - above average quality; 3 - average quality; 2 - below average quality; 1 - unacceptable quality.

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Unacceptable
COLOR (balance, intensity, use of color)	5	4	3	2	1
LIGHTING (adequacy, special uses)	5	4	3	2	1
CAMERAS (composition of shots, movements, sequence of shots, close-ups, camera placements)	5	4	3	2	1
SETS AND SET DRESSINGS (functional use, style, kinds)	5	4	3	2	1
MAKEUP AND COSTUMES (appropriateness, style)	5	4	3	2	1
SPECIAL EFFECTS (inserts, supers)	5	4	3	2	1
FILM SEGMENTS	5	4	3	2	1
EDITS (quality of edit points)	5	4	3	2	1
TRANSITIONS (dissolves, cuts)	5	4	3	2	1
CONTINUITY OF PROGRAMMING (obvious flow)	5	4	3	2	1
SOUND (adequate miking, balance, extraneous noise, mixing, synchronization)	5	4	3	2	1
MUSIC (appropriate, underscoring, theme, instrumentation, selection)	5	4	3	2	1
TALENT (moves, delivery, casting, voice)	5	4	3	2	1
PUPPETS (movements, timing, voices, synchronization, setting, appropriateness)	5	4	3	2	1
ANIMATION (art work, sound, timing)	5	4	3	2	1
GRAPHICS (titling)	5	4	3	2	1
OVERALL QUALITY	5	4	3	2	1

10. In your professional opinion, will a series of television tapes produced by AEL be suitable for use at your facility, assuming that AEL continues to use the same procedures and techniques utilized in the production of the pilot tapes? Yes ___ No ___ Comments _____

_____

11. How would tapes such as these be received in your market area?

3	2	1
Enthusiastically	So-So	Poorly

12. Would you be willing to make some effort to obtain such tapes?

3	2	1
Definitely	Maybe	No

13. After viewing the pilot tapes, what changes or revisions would you suggest for the television series? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Appendix B

State Department Educational Television Personnel
from AEL's Region

Name	State
Frank Blake	West Virginia
James Grover	Ohio
Blaze Gusic	Pennsylvania
Chester Hill	Tennessee
James Stork	Alabama